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HALIFAX.

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THE NEW HEATHEN.

HEATH GRAMMAR SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

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EDITORIAL.

The Editor feels more satisfied with this issue of "The Heathen" than he has done with its predecessors. Ninepence is a large price to pay for a school magazine, and unless each number is a bumper one, the purchaser feels justly that he is not getting his money's worth. Unfortunately the conditions of publication make it impossible for the price to be lowered, but we have this time managed to provide enough contributions and in sufficient variety to enable us to feel that we are not asking too much. All the older contributors have done their duty by us, nor have the younger members failed to provide their quota. We would like to call special attention to "Jasper's" one-act play. To those who are skilled in these things, it will appear worth the cost of the Magazine itself. The Editor is very glad to have the privilege of printing it. At the end of the year we are going to present two prizes, one for boys over sixteen and one for those under, for the best contribution of any description made to the Magazine. Not that the virtue of writing is not its own reward, but that we may show our appreciation of what has given us pleasure. The term has been remarkable for the frosty weather we have enjoyed. There has been a good deal of tobogganing and some back-sliding—involuntary, we admit, but a thaw has arrived, and Christmas promises to be as wet and miserable as usual. Halifax, like another hilly place, may be a good foster mother of men, but as a pleasure resort it is not attractive. The Editor wishes his readers a merry Christmas, but is very glad it only comes once a year in Halifax.

VARIOUS.

We were honoured during the term by a civic visit paid us by the then Mayor (Alderman Waddington) and Mrs. and Miss Waddington. The boys had the advantage of an address from the Mayor.

Mr. A. Comfort, our Art Master, gave us early in the term a most instructive lantern lecture on English water-colour painters up to Turner.

Mr. W. Edwards, Head Master of Bradford Grammar School, and formerly Head Master of Heath, has just been married to Miss F. S. Thompson. We wish him and his wife many years of happiness.

Mr. R. Fox has written "People of the Steppes," which has been reviewed most favourably. We hoped to publish a review by a history specialist, but he cried off, alleging too much homework as excuse.

The Dean of York presented the prizes at Speech Day. We did not then know that we were listening to the future Dean of Westminster. We are very proud to have been honoured by his presence.

Skelton has been acting as second watchman in "Much Ado About Nothing" at King Cross Dramatic Society. He hopes for promotion at the next play they intend to produce.

There is to be no school play this term, but F. Cockroft is organising an entertainment in aid of this magazine. We hope, for our sakes, that it has been successful.

An artless youth recently asked the Editor what standard was required for ar-

tive side of the House was amply represented, but it was observed with some apprehension that a large and turbulent multitude had filed into the back benches. Many old familiar faces were welcomed and some were not. Mr. Cockroft, jun., at the head of a large Communist faction, proposed Comrade Birch for the post of Secretary, but having been gently but firmly ruled out of order by the Chairman, settled down to a steady policy of obstruction. We should be only too happy to recommend Mr. Cockroft, jun., to any struggling football club in need of strong and steady support. But we cannot help suggesting that the introduction of a good deal of finesse might possibly improve his powers of debating. In the teeth of strenuous opposition from the popular side Mr. Coghlin was elected Secretary and Mr. Cockroft, sen., Treasurer. Messrs. Davenport, Birch, and Cockroft, jun., were elected members of the Committee. Ere the meeting adjourned the Chairman took occasion to express a hope that the overflowing zeal of the Lower Sixth members might with advantage be diverted into channels more nearly connected with the legitimate functions of a debating society.

A meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, October 6th. The attendance was somewhat scanty, but lack of numbers was discounted to a large extent by Mr. Corney's presence in the chair and by the fact that the majority of those present were experienced veterans.

Mr. Coghlin proposed and Mr. Birch seconded that "This House is of the opinion that the possession of a sense of humour is to be preferred to that of any other quality." Mr. F. Cockroft, seconded by Mr. Heaton, opposed.

The debate was remarkable in the first place for the tendency to levity displayed by most of the speakers, and in the second for the fearsome puns dragged into the light of day by Mr. Birch. The misguided youth set forth as examples of humour some of the more criminal atrocities of the late Theodore Hook. Mr. Mallinson refrained from throwing his weight on either side of the discussion, but Mr. Barber made a promising maiden speech, and everyone else spoke. The motion was carried by a large majority.

The House then indulged in a brief impromptu debate centreing chiefly on Communism and Ladies' Fashions. Mr. Heaton supported the ruddy banner in vigorous fashion, and swept all moderate speakers before him: his eloquence won over the opinion of the House, and it might be said with justice that the Reds never flagged. The speeches of the evening reached on the whole a very fair standard, and promised well for the coming session.

A meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, November 3rd. The attendance was somewhat larger than that of the previous meeting owing to the presence of the cream of the intellect of the Remove, in addition to the stalwarts of the Lower Sixth. Public business took the form of a municipal election. Mr. Bessy upheld the Conservative claims; Mr. Davenport showed that Labour was not in vain; Mr. E. Cockroft worked hard for the unemployed; Mr. Lockwood represented perfectly the Sunday School Teachers' Union; Mr. Heaton was a red-hot Socialist; Mr. Birch chanted the praises of the Band of Hope. All the speeches were good, but it was noticed with surprise that some of Mr. Birch's arguments had been used last year by a lady Prohibitionist. Despite a strong facial resemblance, Mr. Birch denied any relationship with the lady. In the course of the evening all the new members spoke. The candidates were asked many questions, and answered a few of them. Mr. Heaton and Mr. Birch topped the poll together, and, after a tie with Mr. Davenport, Mr. E. Cockroft was elected to the third seat.

A meeting of the Society was held on Tuesday, November 24th. The faithful were present almost to a man.

Mr. Heaton, seconded by Mr. Davenport, proposed: "That in the opinion of this House emigration should be compulsory for the able-bodied poor." Mr. Birch opposed, seconded by Mr. E. Cockroft. The debate that followed was quite the best of the session. It was remarkable for the tone of seriousness adopted by almost every speaker. The Remove members spoke with one exception. Mr. Green argued well, as did also Mr. Dixon. Mr. Sawdon, as far as one could gather from a sub-current of amused chuckles (emanating from Mr. Sawdon), made a funny speech, and also gave a reading from Cobbett. But

tenant's Lake. His health, however, broke down, and necessitated his retirement from active service for a time in 1771. During the early history of the disputes with the American colonies he perceived clearly that the Colonists had right on their side, and warmly supported their cause. At the beginning of the war he was offered the appointment of First Lieutenant to the Duke of Cumberland, which would have put him on the path of certain promotion. But he resolutely refused to fight against the cause which he felt to be just, and thus nobly renounced the prospects of advancement in his profession. The year 1774 marks the publication of his first plea on behalf of the Colonists, entitled "American Independence the Glory and Interest of Great Britain." In the following year, when the Nottinghamshire Militia was first raised, he was appointed major, and in this capacity he served for seventeen years. He was at last superseded on account of his political opinions. In 1776 appeared his first work on Parliamentary reform, which, with the solitary exception of Earl Stanhope's pamphlets, seems to have been the earliest publication on the subject. Thenceforth he devoted his life chiefly to the attainment of universal suffrage and annual Parliaments. In 1778 he unsuccessfully contested the county elections of Nottinghamshire, and in the same year he conceived the project of a political association, which took shape in 1780 as the Society for Constitutional Information, and which included among its members some of the most distinguished men of the day. From this organisation sprang the more famous Corresponding Society. Major Cartwright worked assiduously for the promotion of Parliamentary reform; published several pamphlets; carried on a very extensive correspondence, and attended a host of political meetings. He was included in the witnesses at the trial of his confreres, Horne Tooke, Thelwall, and Hardy in 1794, and was himself arraigned for conspiracy in 1819. He was found guilty, and condemned to pay a fine of £100. He took up his abode in London, and there spent the last years of his life. He was warmly loved by all who knew him intimately; for while outsiders looked chiefly at his inflexibility of political principle, and styled him the Father of Parliamentary Reform, his personal friends saw his unflinching integrity, his gentleheartedness, his warm

affections, his unfailing courtesy, and Spartan simplicity of life. His health waned in 1822, and his unconquerable spirit was greatly depressed at the same time by public sorrows and private bereavements. The reverses in Spain, occurring simultaneously with the illness of a sister and the death of his brother, conspired to snuff out a feebly flickering flame, and his death occurred in 1824.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

A FARCE IN ONE ACT.

By "JASPER."

Characters:

The Author, a charming young man.

Perkins, a butler.

Sylvia, a modern young woman.

Miss Ethel O. Ell, a novelist.

Miss Muffit, a first-nighter.

Daphne, a romantic young woman.

The Hon. Frederick Cholmondley-Beauchamp, a chap.

Miss Prim, a college undergraduate.

Miss Swatte, another.

Scene: The Author's Study.

Time: Afternoon.

Time of action: About 25 minutes.

The scene is a room furnished in an ordinary way. There are two or three chairs placed at intervals against the walls. There is a door to the left and a fireplace with mantelpiece containing bric-a-brac on the right. Near the door the author is sitting at a desk with a pile of paper in front of him. He is a handsome young man, and is at present biting his pen and running his fingers through his hair. He gets up, walks across the room, comes back and sits down again. Then he begins writing.

Author (reading what he has written):

Scene, the drawing-room at the house of Lady Cicely Travers in Berkeley Square: So far so good. Now all I need is a few characters, some smart conversation and a plot, and the blessed play's written. (He leans back in his chair and sticks his hands in his pockets). Now, who's got to enter

first? One of the servants perhaps. Or possibly there should be someone in the room to begin with. "Lady Cicely discovered writing a letter." Or perhaps "In the middle of the carpet the Hon. Freddie is practising putting." (He takes another stroll across the room and sits down again deep in thought for a few minutes. Then enter Perkins. He is in evening dress and carries a salver).

Author (startled): :: Hullo!

Perkins: Good afternoon, sir.

Author: And who the deuce are you?

Perkins: I beg your pardon, sir; but do you mean my profession or —?

Author: I mean, what's your name?

Perkins: Yes sir. My name, sir. Well, sir. I might say it varies, if I might use the word.

Author: Varies? What on earth do you mean?

Perkins: Well, sir, it's like this. Sometimes they call me Parks, or Jarvis, or something like that, and sometimes they call me Charles, or Jasper, or Hilary. Mr. P. G. Wodehouse calls me Jeeves, you know, sir. It's a case, one might almost say, sir, of *de gustibus nil nisi bonum*. Personally I think Perkins is as good a name as any.

Author: O, you mean you have a lot of different names?

Perkins: Yes, sir. You see, in different plays —

Author: Plays? O, I see, you're an actor, are you?

Perkins: No, sir. I'm a character.

Author: Are you trying to be funny?

Perkins: No, sir. I only said I was a character. Don't you recognise me?

Author: Recognise you? I've never seen you before.

Perkins: O come, sir, come. I'm sure you must have. Why, I've been in every other play for the last fifty years, off and on, sir. Surely you've seen my name at the top of the bill, "Characters in order of their appearance—Perkins, family butler, so and so."

Author: I see. So as a matter of fact you're nobody, eh?

Perkins: Nobody?

Author: Well, you've no real existence?

Perkins: Ah, sir, it's easy to see you're writing your final play. Lor' bless you, sir, if I was to tell you how many promising young authors had tried to get on without me and failed, you wouldn't hardly believe me. And the people like me, too, sir. As the poet says, I go on for ever. At least, I have done so far.

Author: So you think I'd better shove you in my play?

Perkins: Think you'd better? I'm sure you've got to now, sir. (He goes behind the author and looks at what he has written). "The drawing-room at the house of Lady Cicely Travers in Berkeley Square." Now you've just got to write "Enter Perkins." You can't do anything else.

Author: Right ho. (He writes) "Enter Perkins." Now we've started at any rate. But what are you going to do now you have entered? It doesn't seem right for a butler to soliloquise.

Perkins: No, sir; it's a thing we very seldom do. What we usually do is to start dusting the furniture, or reading the correspondence on the table or forging a check or two, until someone else comes in.

Author: Very well, carry on then. You'd better begin dusting the furniture, because my correspondence isn't at all interesting and I haven't got a cheque book.

Perkins: Very good, sir. (Perkins pulls a rag out of his pocket and begins to dust the furniture in an elegant manner. The Author leans back and watches him thoughtfully. Sylvia comes in. She is dressed very dashing and made up very efficiently. She is smoking a cigarette in a long holder).

Sylvia: Hullo, Jasper. You here again?

Perkins: Good afternoon, miss. Yes, I'm here again; but I'm not Jasper this time.

Sylvia: No?

Perkins: No, miss. I'm Perkins for this one.

Sylvia: O, you'll be happy at last then. You were always mad about that name (To the Author): Would you mind telling me who I am?

Author: I was just going to ask you that.

Sylvia: Good heavens, do you call yourself an author —?

Author (modestly): No, no, I —

Sylvia: And don't know the name of your own heroine?

Author: O, you're the heroine, are you? Why didn't you say so before?

Sylvia: It's a poor author who doesn't recognise his own heroine. But you might as well give me a name. A good one, please.

Author: Well, how do you like Sylvia Courtenay?

Sylvia: Well, it's not too bad. I suppose it will do.

Perkins: Why, I should think it would. Last time you were called Emily Smithkin-Bloggs.

Sylvia: I wasn't!

Perkins: Oo you were!

Sylvia (reluctantly): Well, perhaps I was then. But that was only a beastly Suburban thing anyway, and the author had toothache while he was writing it. And you've no need to talk either; you know very well he called you Jeames the Ancient Servitor.

Perkins: He didn't!

Sylvia: He did!

Author: Now, now, what about this play? Hadn't we better be getting on with it?

Perkins (sulkily): Well, she shouldn't call me Ancient Servitor.

Sylvia (sulkily): Well, he shouldn't call me—what he did.

Author: Well, we'll never mind that now. You've both got nice names in this play, so we might as well carry on.

Sylvia: How's it getting on so far?

Author: O, it's ripping as far as it goes.

Sylvia: And how far does it go?

Author: This is it: "Scene. The drawing-room at the house of Lady Cicely Travers in Berkeley Square. Enter Perkins. He begins dusting the furniture." That's all. I want to know what happens now.

Sylvia: O, that's easy. Are you ready, Jas—Perkins?

Perkins: Right O. (He begins dusting again).

Sylvia: Well, we're off. "Enter Sylvia Courtenay. She is a splendid type of the modern young woman, lithe as a cat in her every moment; she seems a personification of the essence of *joie de vivre*." (Perkins coughs). Have you got that? (The Author has been writing to her dictation).

Author (scribbling): "— essence of *joie de vivre*." Yes. Carry on. (Sylvia goes to a chair in centre and sits down. Perkins looks up).

Perkins: Good afternoon, miss.

Sylvia: Hullo Perkins. (She speaks with a drawl, and overdoes it slightly). What are you doing in here?

Perkins: Dusting, miss.

Sylvia: Dusting?

Perkins: Yes, miss.

Sylvia: Dusting—doesn't it seem a useless occupation, Perkins?

Perkins: Never thought about it, miss.

Sylvia: You wouldn't. Dust, my dear Perkins, is exactly like convention. You brush it away from one part of your mind, and it goes and settles on another.

Perkins: Yes, miss.

Sylvia: But, of course, you don't understand, do you, Perkins?

Perkins: No, miss.

Sylvia: Well, Perkins, that was an epigram

Perkins: Was it really miss?

Sylvia: Yes, Perkins, and a very good one, too.

Perkins: Well, miss, epigrams always seem like mistakes to me.

Sylvia: Indeed Perkins?

Perkins: Yes, miss, because everyone makes them but no one can see how bad his own are. Exit Perkins with senile chuckle. (He goes out, rubbing his hands).

Sylvia (getting up indignantly): Here, I say, that's too bad!

Author (he is writing busily and does not look up): What is?

Sylvia: Perkins, of course.

Author (still writing): Indeed.

Sylvia: O, listen, can't you? Didn't you hear what he said?

Author (looking up): What who said?

Sylvia: What Perkins said.

Author: Of course I did. I've written it down as well.

Sylvia (running behind and looking over his shoulder): Well, you'll have to cross it out, then. It's impossible!

Author: Why? It seems all right to me.

Sylvia: But he made an epigram!

Author: I suspected that myself.

Sylvia: O don't you see? He's a butler!

Author: How did you guess?

Sylvia: Well, butlers can't make epigrams.

Author: Poor chaps! Why not?

Sylvia: It's infringement of copyright! Epigrams are reserved for modern young women and people like that. Do you call yourself an author?

Author: I've told you before that I don't.

Sylvia: Well, anyway, did you ever hear a butler make an epigram?

Author: Now you come to mention it, I can't say I ever did. Of course, I never made an intensive study of butlers —.

Sylvia: Well, then, what right have you to talk? I tell you—good heavens, what's happening outside? (Somebody is trying to get in apparently. A voice says "Mind out of the way!" Another "O please I must go in!" and another "Get out of the way, Marmaduke!" Then they all start shouting together. Perkins can be heard remonstrating with them. "You can't come in here; it's not your sort of thing at all; this isn't a revue; stop making such a row; go away." The door is banged repeatedly. The knob turns convulsively. There are thuds and screams. The Author and Sylvia stare at one another, mystified. Then the Author strides to the door and opens it).

Author: What the deuce is the matter?

(Perkins staggers in backwards).

Perkins: Don't letem in! Don't —.

(But it is too late. Three women rush in and stand a little breathlessly, looking round them. Miss Ell is tall and stern, Daphne is rather smaller and

very pretty, Miss Muffet is smaller still. Miss Ell steps forward towards the Author).

Miss Ell: Are you the author of this play?

Author: I'm afraid I am, as far as it's got.

Miss Ell: Then here's my card.

Author (reading it): "Miss Ethel O. Ell." O, you're the famous novelist, aren't you? I'm delighted to meet you.

Miss Ell (complacently): I thought you would be.

Author: And to what do I owe this honour?

Miss Ell: Well, I thought I'd come along and have a look how you were getting on, just to give you a few hints and so on.

Author: That's frightfully kind of you.

Miss Ell: O, not at all, not at all. Don't mention it. I take such a delight in my own work that it's always a pleasure to me to help anyone less fortunate than myself.

Author: Indeed.

Miss Ell: O yes, I assure you. You know, I think everyone ought to share his (or her) talents with his (or her) fellow-beings. Don't you agree with me?

Author: Ye-es, I think I do. But don't you think it depends to some extent on the quality of his (or her) talents?

Miss Ell (roguishly): Flatterer! (She pushes him playfully).

Author: But your friends?

Miss Ell: My friends?

Author: Yes, the other ladies. Won't you introduce me?

Miss Ell: O, these aren't my friends. I've never seen them before. (She sits down).

Daphne (coming forward): I'm afraid we shall have to introduce ourselves, sir. I'm the heroine.

Author: Indeed. How do you do—Daphne?

Daphne: O thank you, sir. I love Daphne for a name, but I've never been called Daphne yet.

Author: Well, you're Daphne now. And you —? (He turns to Miss Muffet).

Miss Muffet: My name is Miss Muffet, sir.

Author: O, how are you? I've heard such a lot about you.

Miss Muffit: O, no sir, not about me. You mean my sister.

Author: The lady whose meal was so unfortunately interrupted?

Miss Muffit: Yes. Of course, there's no truth in that story about the spider.

Author: Not really? Why, I've believed in it since first my infant lips could lisp the rhyme.

Miss Muffit: Well, sir, it's wrong really. You see, my sister isn't at all afraid of spiders. In fact she loves them so much that she keeps one for a pet. She calls it Pythagoras.

Author: Why?

Miss Muffit: Because it's always dropping perpendiculars. Well, Messrs. Brown and Co. (you know, the famous curds and whey manufacturers) gave her a lot of money for the rhyme as a testimonial, with a photograph of Pythagoras sitting down beside her. He could do all sorts of tricks like that.

Author: How very interesting. And now would you mind explaining why you've come here to-day? You see, I'm frightfully busy. I'm supposed to be writing a play. These are the characters.

Miss Muffit: O yes, that's why I've come. You see, I'm a regular first-nighter, and so is my sister. Each of us is always trying to see plays before the other. She went to a dress rehearsal last week. So I thought I'd beat her by coming here and watching you write a play. She can't do better than that, can she?

Author: Well, I only hope she doesn't try to come and see me thinking of one. But if you will sit down just now and watch, we may be able to get on with the play.

Miss Muffit: Thank you. (She sits down beside Miss Ell).

Author (going back to his desk and sitting down): Now, you people, we'll carry on. (Sylvia and Perkins have been talking together on the right. Daphne is standing a yard or two away from them). Perkins, you should be outside, shouldn't you?

Perkins: So I should, so I should. (He goes out. Sylvia comes forward).

Sylvia: I was in by myself, wasn't I?

Author: Yes. What are you going to do now?

Sylvia: I'm going to ring for Perkins and ask him to bring me a cocktail.

Daphne (to Author): Please, when does the heroine come in?

Sylvia: The heroine's in now, of course.

Daphne: But I'm the heroine.

Sylvia: You! Good heavens! My dear girl, I'm the heroine of this show.

Daphne: You the heroine! I thought you were the maid. You've got paint and powder all over your face; you wear short skirts; you smoke cigarettes. How can you be the heroine?

Sylvia: Nowadays all heroines paint, all heroines wear short skirts, all heroines smoke cigarettes. I suppose you're fond of moonlight, and dreamy waltzes and sunlit mountain-sides and sloppy things like that.

Daphne: I don't care what you say. You can go back to "Fallen Angels." I'm the heroine here.

Sylvia: O, go and ask someone what you'll do when he is far away and you are blue. I'm the heroine of this play. You ask the Author.

Daphne: All right, we'll ask the Author. (They turn towards him).

Sylvia and Daphne: Now, which of us is the heroine of this play?

Author (scratching his head and leaning back in his chair): I'm afraid I don't know myself.

Sylvia: Call yourself an author and —?

Author: O, I've told you twice already that I don't. Won't you believe me? (Turning in desperation to Miss Ell): What do you think, Miss Ell?

Miss Ell: Why, the solution's obvious. (She points to Daphne). I don't know how this person managed to get here at all. She's here on false pretences. She simply can't be heroine, she's so hopelessly out of date. People like her are only fit for "East Lynne." Now this young lady (indicating Sylvia) is obviously the very person you need. She's up-to-date, she's unsentimental, she's the ideal heroine.

Author: Thanks very much, Miss Ell.

Miss Muffit (impetuously): O, don't have that simply horrible person for your heroine. (Pointing to Sylvia): She's quite impossible, like a pair of Oxford bags worn with golf stockings. You never meet a girl like that, do you?

Author: Well, frankly, I never meet girls at all. Can't stand them.

Miss Muffit: Look at Daphne. She's perfectly natural; she's romantic. She's an ideal girl. O do have her for heroine!

Author (quite at a loss): I'm afraid I haven't the foggiest what to do. (Struck by an idea): I know, we'll let the hero choose.

Miss Ell, Miss Muffit, Daphne, Sylvia: But where's the hero?

Author: Good heavens, I never thought of that.

(Enter Perkins with a card on a salver. He takes it to the author).

Author (reading it): The Hon. Frederick Cholmondley - Beauchamp. Great! Here's the very man for us. Bring him in, Perkins. (Exit Perkins. Enter the Hon. Freddie. He has a monocle and is well dressed).

Freddie: Ah, how d'you do everybody? You're the author I suppose? (turning to Miss Ell).

Miss Ell: No, this young man is writing the play.

Freddie: O, how d'you do? I'm Freddie.

Author: Not really?

Freddie: Yes, quite.

Author: Well, well. It's fearfully good of you to come, and all that, but you see I'm supposed to be writing a play, and I'm rather busy, so —

Freddie: I know you're writing a play, old bean. That's why I tottered along.

Author: How kind of you.

Freddie: O, don't mention it. Just stagger on with the old play, and I'll come in when I'm wanted.

Author: O, I see, you're a character as well, are you?

Freddie: You've said it. I am Freddie, the character. (He throws his head back and pats himself on the chest).

Author: And what are you supposed to do in a play?

Freddie: O, potter about.

Author: I see. Anything else?

Freddie: Sometimes I—well, act the goat, you know —

Author: That must be a change. Well, to-day you're going to be the hero.

Freddie: The what?

Author: The hero.

Freddie (putting on his hat): Cheerio, people! (He walks to the door).

Author: Stop! (He stops). Where the dickens are you off to?

Freddie: O anywhere. Tell me a good place and I'll go there.

Author: Why are you going, anyway? I thought you were one of my characters.

Freddie: So did I. But I've just decided I'm not.

Author: Why?

Freddie: Because my character's Freddie, and you'll not make me do the hero stunt in any old play. Cheerio people! (He saunters out).

Author: Well I'm da—downcast!

Sylvia: I should jolly well think so! Call yourself an author and —?

Author: O can't you take my word for it that I don't?

Daphne: Well, what are you going to do about a hero?

Author: Must we really have one?

Miss Ell, Miss Muffit, and Sylvia: Don't be silly! Of course you must! Call yourself an author —?

Author (putting his hands over his ears): O be quiet! BE QUIET!

Daphne: But you really must have a hero. I don't think people would like to see a lot of women acting by themselves.

Author: No, I can quite understand that.

Daphne: Then what are you going to do?

Author: O, I don't know.

Miss Ell (getting up and going to his desk): I'll tell you what to do.

Author: I say, that's frightfully good of you.

Miss Ell: It's a pleasure. You just go to the nearest river and jump in. Wait till you feel as if you're drowning, and then —

Author: Come out?

Miss Ell: No, stay in a bit longer. (She goes out. The Author stares after her. The Hon. Freddie saunters in).

Freddie (to Sylvia): I say, Ermyntre—

Sylvia: I'm Sylvia this time.

Freddie: How nice for you! Well, anyhow, I thought I'd come and tell you that Mr. Noel Coward's just started another play. So you'll be wanted probably.

Sylvia: O Scrumptious! (She runs out and disappears with Freddie. She comes back immediately, and looks in at the door). Call yourself an author and —?

Author (picking up his inkwell): Get out! (Sylvia disappears).

Miss Muffit: Well, what are you going to do now?

Author: Ask me another.

Daphne: Well, if there isn't going to be a play, I think I'd better go. You don't mind, do you?

Author: O not at all.

Daphne (going to his desk): And thanks awfully for having me in your play. I hope it's a success. You'll remember me, won't you?

Author: Yes, rather.

Daphne: And next time I'm in one of your plays I hope I'll have something to say. Good-bye.

Author: Good-bye. (She goes out).

Miss Muffit: The play will be starting soon, won't it?

Author: Yes, now that I've got rid of all the characters. (He walks across the room deep in thought. As he is coming back there is a knock on the door).

Author: Come in. (Enter the Misses Prim and Swatte. They are armed with voluminous note-books and fountain-pens).

Miss Prim. Good afternoon. Are you the gentleman who is writing a play?

Author: Am I?

Miss Muffit: Of course you are.

Author (to Miss Prim): Yes, I am, of course.

Miss Prim: Well, my friend, Miss Swatte (she bows) and myself —

Miss Swatte: This is Miss Prim —

Miss Prim: Have taken the liberty—the very great liberty—of coming here to see you to-day.

Miss Swatte: You see, Miss Prim and I are students at the local college, and we thought it would be a most valuable aid to our studies if we could see one of our most promising playwrights at work. (They both smile winningly).

Miss Prim: So, if you really don't mind, we'll just watch you as you write your play, and make notes on its construction.

Miss Swatte: And perhaps you could give us a few notes on Dramatic Irony: we've got an essay on it this week-end.

Miss Prim: O, and perhaps you could tell me which of Shakespeare's characters was known as the "gloomy Dane"?

Miss Swatte: And if it isn't too much, you might give us some notes on (she fumbles with her note-book, and reads from it): "While Launcelot Gobbo will stand for ever in the foremost ranks of English literature as an example of Shakespeare's splendid control over the elemental force of human passions, nevertheless, perhaps he is not to be compared with Juliet as a character of tragic and romantic beauty?"

Miss Prim: O, and perhaps you could just tell—

Author (raising his hand to stay the tumult): Ladies! Ladies! Permit me to speak for just one moment. You seem to be labouring under some delusion. Allow me to inform you that I have no claims to authorship, and, furthermore, that I am not writing a play.

Miss Muffit, Miss Prim, and Miss Swatte: Not writing a play!

Miss Prim: Then you have inveigled us here under a false nomenclature. Permit me to wish you good-day, sir.

Miss Swatte: I don't believe you know an iambic from a trochee. Good-day, sir. (They go out).

Miss Muffit: Then you aren't writing a play at all?

Author: No, I'm not writing a play at all.

Miss Muffit: Well, when it's produced I won't go to see it."

big shady-looking character, and a mask adorned his sinister features. As Dick watched he pulled a large nail from his pocket and began industriously hammering the nail into Dick's back tyre. This operation completed, he walked over to the front tyre and treated it in the same way. What could be his object? thought Dick. Was it possible that he was trying to puncture his tyres? It certainly looked like it, thought Dick, observing that the tyres were now absolutely flat. The stranger finished his dastardly work by implanting a hefty kick on Dick's sparking plug, and then sprang on to another machine which Dick had not observed. It was a $4\frac{1}{2}$ h.p. Blott with a self-feeding incubator, a very hot engine and a transposed clutch, fastened with a large bolt to the kick-start. The saddle, fitted to the back of the bike, was of a brownish-coloured leather. Don't you envy him, readers? Ah, but wait.

Merely pausing to adjust his made-up bow, Dick rushed like a fiend into the back-yard. A hasty glance at his machine assured him that new tyres were required; also his sparking plug was in need of a new plug. To fit on new tyres and hammer in a fresh plug was the work of seconds. In less time than it takes to tell, Dick was speeding along the dusty road in pursuit of the mysterious stranger.

It was not long before Dick could fancy that he heard the noise of the stranger's engine, sure enough, as Dick shot over the brow of a hill, he spied the stranger's powerful machine gliding smoothly along. Dick jerked his clutch back as far as it would go, opened the lid of the throttle until it was gaping wide, and gave the machine her head. The stranger did the like, but slowly Dick began to overhaul him. The $4\frac{1}{2}$ Blott, though a powerful machine, had a weak induction tube, and the thread of his carburettor screw was rather worn. This obstructed his progress, and as Dick came up to him hand over hand, he heard the stranger's venomous curses drowning the noise of his engine. Nearer and nearer came Dick. He could feel the air of the stranger's exhaust pipe fan his fevered brow. Now Dick's front mud-guard was within an inch of the stranger's silencer, and the brave boy rejoiced. He leaned forward, and, with a little jump, caught hold of the stranger's coat tails. They came away in his hand! They were

false! The speed of the two must now have been verging almost on the ten-mile an hour mark! Dick was conscious of a poisonous leer in front of him, and knew that his own machine had stopped dead. Soon the $4\frac{1}{2}$ h.p. Blott was a mere speck on the horizon.

There was not a moment to be lost. The trouble must be rectified. Hastily Dick dismounted to find the source of it. With a practised hand he took the clutch to pieces. It seemed all right. He then dismantled the sparking plug and tested it with litmus. There was nothing wrong. Dick, nonplussed, took off his check cap and scratched his head for a moment. Then a thought struck him. He took the gear wheel to pieces. Sure enough, a large brick had become wedged in the hub! Needless to say, in two seconds he had once more mounted, had pressed his electric starter, and was buzzing along the road at 75 miles per hour.

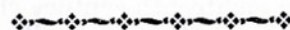
At length the stranger came into sight. To every touch of hand or foot Dick's trusty machine responded, and at length the two machines were alongside. The stranger's face wore an expression of baffled hate, terrifying in its intensity. Suddenly Dick sprang sideways on to his enemy's back. The strength of the impact brought them both crashing into a ditch, but, thank heaven, Dick was uppermost. To tie the stranger, uttering foul words, on the pillion of the Muglass was the work of a second. Dick turned the machine homewards, joy in his heart.

* * * * *

Dick was the hero of the little town in which he lived. All were familiar with the slim lad, buzzing around the Monkey Run on Saturday afternoons to the delight of all the Factory Lassies and the envy of his less skilful confreres. He still rides the $4\frac{1}{2}$ h.p. Muglass on which he made his celebrated capture. But if you look closely at his waistcoat you will see a beautiful golden watch-chain flashing in the sun! It is a present from the Boss to celebrate his brilliant exploit.

THE END.

—F. R. C.



realise it in an instant, and then he would say to Magister "Ubi est Servus?" meaning "Where's old Servus got to?" You could almost imagine the anxious look in his eyes, as he asked him; you could see that he would blame himself if Servus came to any harm. The good-hearted chap knew that he ought to take care of Servus; there was no telling what the lad would be up to when there was no one about.

But Magister says "Servus ad silvam abiit," and you could almost hear Davus sigh with relief. He knows Servus is all right when he's playing about in the wood, bless him; so he would go on talking to Magister.

What pleasant chats they used to have, to be sure! Magister was a curious sort of a chap, always trying to find things out; and he would keep asking Davus questions, and, of course, Davus would answer them. He was a brainy chap, Davus. The things he knew! It was marvellous.

For instance, Magister would say, "Who was Hannibal?" And that would start old Davus off. You knew he could have gone on for hours if the editors would have let him, but they always cut him off at the bottom of the page. It didn't matter much, though, you were sure to meet him again a page or two further on.

“Hannibal,” Davus would reply (and straight off, too, without having to think about it, like some folks), “Hannibal was a Carthaginian. He lived in Carthage. He carried on a war against the Romans. He crossed the Alps. He came into Italy. Scipio, a Roman general, defeated him.”

And so on. You wouldn't believe the things he could talk about. I remember one story he told about a master. "The Schoolmaster of Fallerii" it was called. Lord! What a story! My sides ached for days after I had read it. It was about a master who was going to hand some kids over to the enemy, but the enemy's general made the kids chase him back to the city. The way Davus told it was simply great. Those short, pithy sentences of his! And the best of it was that Magister didn't seem to like the story much. Said he pitied the master!

Aye, they were great days I spent with Davus! He was a splendid chap for a friend. How I wish I could meet him again!

How —

Eh? What's that you say? You've got a copy at home? Bring it to me? Now? Will I read some of it to you?

Fearfully sorry, I can't to-day, I've got to rush off to tea now. Isn't it a pity? I should have loved to translate it all for you, all about dear old Davus. Some other time perhaps—Monday, you say? Well, not Monday, I've got to go somewhere, fearful Well, cheerio! —Jasper.



SWEET AGONY.

God, I am weary. God, how thick the dust.
I stumble, and am blind. Beneath the
weight

Darkly I grope: my path is never straight,
It runs in silly circles. Can I trust
My powers that fail at every step? I know
Nothing. Above me looms the awful vault
Impenetrable. Vain to flinch, to halt:
Rest stings my blindness: tottering I go.
God, for one instant open my blind eyes
To the keen sky, to the cloud's snowy swell.
God, let me sear my shrivelled soul in Hell
For a brief instant's view of Paradise.
Then let me die: and looking back again
Sweet, sweet the agony; delight, the pain.
—Jasper.



: : A FELONY. : :

Seventh Avenue is one of those highly respectable streets which seem to be the homes of respectable lawyers and brokers all the world over. It consists of big, roomy, semi-detached houses, all neat and seemingly newly-painted, which, whilst not pretentious, may yet hold a safe full of jewels and money.

Number 79 had recently been taken over by a person who called himself Lever, and was a jewel-broker in a moderate way. Most of those who are connected with jewels are known to a certain fraternity, and Mr. Lever was no exception. In fact, the fraternity knew that he had taken up his residence in Seventh Avenue almost as soon as he did himself.

It was half-past twelve midnight. A thick fog was eddying between the houses, and wraiths of it streamed across the light thrown by the gaslamps. There were no

lights in No. 79, nor in either of the houses on each side of it. The highly-respectable citizens had retired to rest long ago. Suddenly out of the darkness loomed the figure of a policeman, a stalwart Irishman, alternately swinging his arms and blowing his fingers, to keep warm.

As soon as he had disappeared into the fog another figure appeared, a slighter and more alert person altogether. In a minute he had climbed the iron railings which surrounded the house, and disappeared again with the fog. He crept softly round the side of the house to the servants' quarters at the back. He seemed to know his way about, for he went straight to the window of the servants' hall. Taking out a jemmy he deftly forced the catch and slid the bottom sash up without a sound. He hoisted himself through and closed the window again.

Not a sound greeted him. He drew an electric torch from his pocket, and switched it on. The beam of light travelled slowly round the room, taking in every object. There was a door on the right, and the burglar made for it, treading like a cat, in his rubber-soled shoes. He turned the knob cautiously and opened the door. He was in a corridor. Keeping close to the wall he crept along until he came to a short flight of steps and another door. He passed out of the servants' quarters and into the main part of the house.

Two doors immediately met his gaze, one on each side of the corridor. He took the one on the right. His guess was rewarded. It was the library, and in it should be the safe he wanted.

First of all he went to the window, and immediately drew back. The policeman was passing on his return beat. He turned and looked at the house, but, of course, saw nothing suspicious. When he had passed on again, the burglar let his light travel round once more. At last it rested on the safe. It was small, but tremendously strong; one of the very latest kinds.

He dropped down beside it, and fitted a capon to the lens of his flashlamp. The beam was restricted to a quarter of its former breadth, and he allowed it to rest on the knob which kept the safe locked. Suddenly he stiffened, and switched off his lamp. Crouching down on the side of the safe away from the door, he drew from his

hip pocket a wicked-looking automatic. Then he waited.

The door-knob was turned. Inch by inch the door opened, and a hand appeared, grasping a revolver. A face followed, and gradually the whole man. He was of medium size, but heavily built, with a massive red face, topped by a dirty flat-cap. His other hand held a torch, and he allowed its light to penetrate the gloom, following it with beady eyes. Seeing nothing alarming, he switched it off, and crept to the window as the other had done. As he was looking out a voice behind him snapped out:

"Drop that gun, an' stick yer mitts up."

He whipped round, and did as he was told. The other's automatic was aimed in a direct line with his heart. "An' come away from that window."

Again he obeyed the steady voice, but spoke in turn.

"Say, I'd like ter lamp yer, son," and, without waiting for an answer, he switched on his lamp.

"Gee, s' Ed. Rooney, he gasped.

"S'right," returned Ed. "But I guess yuh're a stranger ter me."

"Come from funder West, but I know youse right 'nough." "Anyway," said Ed. "Dis is my shack; see? Wot you gotta do is show yer back, see?"

"Aw shucks. Let me in Ed. Come on. Fifty, fifty, and not'ing said. Dere's plenty fer bot'."

"Nix. Not a cent," rasped Ed. "An' I guess I c'n dispense wit' youse right now, see?"

"Say, yose sure t'ink you're de whole cheese, don't cher?"

"Shut up," returned Ed. "D'yer want de whole street on us?"

"Huh. Dere ain't no one at home, or I wouldn't be here."

"Wal, I guess I'd amire ter be alone, see? So git, right now," and Ed. moved his gun threateningly.

"All right. I'm goin'. But I'll fix yer, good an' plenty."

With that he went, and Ed. saw him off the premises. He closed the window after him, and set an alarm trap, in case he returned. Then he made his way back again to the library and the safe. Kneeling down, he put his ear to the knob and started to turn it, very slowly, listening intently for the clicking of the tumblers. He worked slowly and patiently, and was rewarded by good luck, for he had the safe open within ten minutes.

Inside there were some ledgers and, what he was searching for, a strong dispatch-box. Taking out his jemmy again, he wrenched the box open, and feasted his eyes on the contents. There were about a hundred diamonds of various sizes, and a quarter of that number of very fine pearls. He put the lot in his pockets and stowed the box away in the safe, which he closed again with its former combination. Then he rose to his feet, dusted his trousers knees, and picked up his torch and the gun which the other man had dropped. With a last look round the room, he went to the door, and returned along the corridor to the room by which he had entered.

Always cautious, he took a look out before opening the window. What he saw there froze him in his tracks. Two policemen were coming round the corner of the house, whispering together.

Ed. jumped back from the window, tore away the trap he had set up, and dashed out into the corridor. He saw a flight of steps, which presumably led to the servants' bedrooms. He flashed up these as silently as possible, and entered the first room he saw. It was small and sparsely furnished, with a bed, a chair, a washstand, and a wardrobe.

Without a sound he tore off his jacket and waistcoat, muffler and shoes, rumbled the pillows and bedclothes, fetched some more clothes from the wardrobe and scattered them about the bed rail. Then he lit a candle, seized the poker, and crept out.

At the top of the stairs he paused to listen. One of the policemen was just passing along the corridor. Presumably he had left the other outside to guard the only exit. Ed. put his foot on the top stair and made it creak. The policeman looked up, and in his hand shone a revolver.

As he took in the details of the figure he saw, however, his face relaxed in a smile, and he lowered his weapon. Putting his finger to his lips to indicate silence, he beckoned to Ed. to come down. As soon as he was near enough, Ed. whispered:

“What is-a da matter. I hear noise and comed down. Master leave-a me in charge. I am-a da cook.”

"S' all right, little man," returned the policeman, reassuringly.

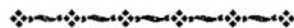
"Someone tipped us off he'd seen someone prowling about in here, so we just came to have a look round. Keep behind me, and you'll be all right."

Thus, obeying the policeman's instructions, Ed. followed him all over the house, into the library, dining-room, breakfast-room, drawing-room, bed-rooms, even into the room where he had with such forethought prepared his alibi.

At last he was satisfied that the bird had flown, and went to rejoin his comrade, leaving Ed. to go back to bed. . . .

It was three o'clock in the morning. The fog was as thick as ever, swirling, and eddying into every nook and cranny. Out of the darkness loomed the figure of a policeman, alternately swinging his arms and blowing his fingers to keep them warm. He looked earnestly at No. 79, and passed slowly by. As soon as he had disappeared into the fog a slight, lithe figure appeared out of the darkness and, climbing the railings, dropped into the road. It turned towards where the policeman had come from, and disappeared, blotted out by the fog.

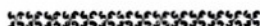
—A. R. T.



: : THE DREAM. : :

Throughout the day the winter sun
Low in the sky had fought the clouds,
And now, his daily journey done
No longer through the western pane
Streamed his defeated rays. The shrouds
Of shapeless shadows clothed the room
Cast by the dying embers' glow,
And whispered of dire Clotho's loom,
And murmured of the ghostly land
Where Acheron and Lethe flow.
And as I sat, I dreamed. I saw
A minstrel from Aegean shores,

Who served no Grecian city's law,
 But travelled through the golden lands
 From where the Danube's delta pours
 Into the sea his chastened flood,
 To the white walls of Memphis' fort:
 From Ilium, still soaked with blood
 To where the Zens-born warrior held
 Heaven's vault to gain the prize he sought.
 He spoke to me as once he spoke
 To conquer kings, or to delight
 The simple country farmer-folk
 With tales of far-off lands, unknown,
 But bathed by him in glorious light
 Like a swift glimpse of paradise,
 His voice, now like the fountain's fall
 Upon the encircling pool, could rise
 Till, like the booming of a drum,
 Its echo passed from wall to wall.
 He told in cadence mystic, sweet,
 The secrets of his birth and life,
 He told me of the Kings of Crete,
 He told me of Achaea's race,
 Mycene's glory, Greece's strife.
 He sang me songs of Ithaca,
 Wooded Zacynthos and Same,
 Of Macedon and Africa,
 Of Scylla's crag, Charybdis' pool,
 Which guard the road past Sicily.
 At last, as, when the nightingale
 Ceases to sing, the woods are still,
 So ceased he: and the dreamy veil
 Was cast aside, and I beheld
 The fire burnt out, and from the hill
 The misty rising moon: no other light
 Pierced the damp cover of the curtained
 night. —Sans Q. Lottes.



"EXPERIENTIA DOCET (?)"

AN EPISODE. (No personal references).

Saturday night. The streets were greasy and wet from the drizzling rain which had fallen since mid-day. The lights from the shop windows were reflected from the muddy pavements. Despite the rain the town was crowded with the usual last-minute shoppers, who clutched bags and umbrellas in feverish hands, and jostled each other to get near the brilliant shop windows.

Amongst this crowd a young man was carefully picking his way. He was a very young man, and was small and dapper. Dressed in his best clothes, his mouth held a cigarette, his hands a walking-stick and

wash-leather gloves, of that unutterably vile yellow colour which provincial young men about town affect.

His name was Clarence, or possibly Oswald. We will call him Clarence, for he certainly looked as if he ought to be called Clarence, and he was on his way to a certain cafe, situated off Main Street, where dances were held every Saturday night.

Now Clarence, although by law permitted to smoke, being seventeen years of age, was not supposed to do so by Those in Authority. Consequently he had rather a furtive air. He was constantly on the look-out for one of Those in Authority, whom he shunned like the plague. On this occasion, however, Clarence unwittingly relaxed his customary caution, because he had other things to think of, or rather one other thing. This other thing was a female, and she was to be at the cafe to-night, so that Clarence's heart, which was violently affected by her, was, so to speak (as she herself would have said), "all of a flutter."

He was so engaged in thinking of bright things to say to her that he failed to perceive Nemesis approaching on his left front. One of Those in Authority was crossing the road towards him! Clarence was just thinking out a brilliant epigram when he became aware of the familiar figure which was approaching.

Swift as a flash his hand went to his mouth, and the cigarette was reposing in the gutter; but had it been seen?

The One in Authority was still approaching. Clarence dived into the crowd, and endeavoured to hide himself behind a stout woman's shopping-bag. Nothing could be seen of him but the purple button on his beautiful new flat cap. The One in Authority passed on, leaving Clarence palpitating, and clinging to a lamp-post to steady himself. Had he been seen? The question throbbed in his head, and drove out the brilliant epigram which he had composed; drove out even the thought of the girl at the cafe.

Gradually the green faded from his cheeks, and Clarence composed himself to think. Suddenly he remembered the dance, and took out his watch. Half-past seven! And the dance started at half-past seven.

Clarence straightened his tie and, resolutely trying to banish the unfortunate in-

cident from his thoughts, continued on his way to the cafe.

But he was destined to have no more peace of mind that day, nor the day after.

He danced even worse than usual at the cafe. He trod on everybody's toes except his own. He forgot the witty things he had thought of, and dropped ice-cream on the dress of the girl for whom he had composed them.

In short, by the time he got home, he was thoroughly miserable. The thought of what would happen if he had been seen smoking kept him awake half the night, and for the other half he dreamt of all the tortures for the wicked he had ever heard of. The next day was Sunday, and, as he was a pious boy, he went to church in the morning and evening. In the morning he started to sing at the wrong time, and everybody turned to stare at him. He shrank behind his hymn-book and wished he were dead. In the evening the sermon was about the wickedness of not honouring and obeying one's parents. He buried himself in his coat-collar, and knew he was damned. At last Monday morning came, and Clarence set out to the slaughter. He did not see the One in Authority until dinner-time, and consequently he worked badly and jumped every time the door opened.

All things come to an end, however, even stories. At half-past twelve Clarence met the One in Authority.

"Ah, Foley, I have been looking for you."

Clarence gasped and gaped, but made a valiant effort to look calm and collected.

"Yes, sir?"

"Yes, I have brought the book I promised you."

"Oh, thanks very much."

They parted.

Clarence had not been seen smoking.

What did he do? Did he swear an oath to abstain in future? Did he hurl forth his cigarette case? Did he ——?

Not at all. He dashed off to tell his friends the story—with embellishments.

—A. R. T.

LINES, Written on FIRST APPROACH- ING the CITY of MANCHESTER and VICTORIA.

Grimly the creaking train its storm-swept way

Battles, through driving wind and swirling rain:

While I in misery (and wetness) crouch
Deep in a corner, 'neath a leaking roof
Essaying to avoid the ceaseless drip
Of waters from above; the while I yearn
With heartfelt longing for th' umbrella's shade.

Vainly I peer through dim and streaming panes

Searching for but a glimpse of that demesne,

That garden capital, beauteous Manchester.
Mournful the sight that greets my eager gaze,

Rows upon rows of house—once perhaps
Of municipal extract—now no more
Than tottering relics: bleak and dreary sight!

And mills and factories rear their gaunt facades

Down to the very railway's edge. But stay!
Can this be Salford, melancholy blight,
And parasite upon fair Manchester?

Is that the school, in yonder chimney's shade

Which now I know so well? Or are my hopes

Shattered for ever, my illusion gone?

Where are the rolling parks, the shimmering founts,

And groves of poplar, stretching far away?

But now, what says this melancholy sign?

I scarce can read it, for the grime and smoke,

The while the train comes quivering to a halt.

Ah! Manchester, Victoria: Sweet is it:

My victory won at last. See, there I glimpse

The lofty marble towers of my goal.

See how with swiftly beating heart I plunge

Deep down into the labyrinthine ways

And tunnels of Mancunian victory.

Stygian the darkness, filled with distant roars

Of unseen Minotaurs, which far away

Crouch in their baneful lairs, to carry off

Hundreds of hapless victims to their doom.

But I, as Theseus, undismayed, go on,

Led by my unseen Princess, unseen thread,

"Daddy, daddy, don't go! The train . . . the train . . ." Her voice trailed off, and she sank back into her delirium. The man and woman looked at one another. How often had this child, this seventh child of a seventh son, uttered its uncanny truths so unexpectedly.

"Must you go?" she asked. He laughed uneasily. "It's all right; don't worry, mother!"

He stepped across to the door and passed into the stormy night.

Drawing up his coat more tightly round his neck he hurried towards that distant speck of light which he recognised as his cabin. Higher and higher shrieked the howling wind and the driving rain strove to beat him back to his humble home. But still he hurried on, and finally saw the glistening rails but a few yards distant. He had but to cross them and walk up the line and he was at his post. How could he come to harm? The child had but wandered in its delirious fever. Smiling at his fears, he stepped forward to cross the rails. On the last he carelessly poised his foot, slipped, and his foot was caught in the points of the crossing. He wrenched hard at his foot, and felt the boot yield in the slippery lock. He wrenched again, and just as he was about to release his foot—horror of horrors!—**he felt the points being changed.** The pain was excruciating as he tugged at the iron vice. Now he realised that only could his foot be freed by the operator, all unsuspecting, thirty yards away. He shrieked aloud, calling him by name. No answer but the mocking re-echo of the whistling wind. Shouted till his throat fell like fire; for too well did he realise why those points had changed. Far away, perhaps a mile, its fire, glowing red, reflected in the smoke, roared the express, tearing inexorably upon him. Perhaps one minute left! Frantically he cried and cried again. Now he could discern the two winking headlamps; now the rail began to quiver, grinding at his searing foot. For besides himself, how many others had he to think of? Those points were not properly in position. The train, roaring towards him at such a speed, could never hope to stop now. There it was now, tearing past the signal-box. With a last despairing shriek he flung himself back; the train roared past, missed the points, and went flying into the black of the night.

Crash after crash rent the air; shrieks and groans mingled with the cracking and splintering of wood. Finally, with a roaring detonation, the engine-boiler burst, flinging its fragments to the skies.

* * * * *

Back in the little cottage the mother turned away from her sleeping child. Suddenly, with a terrible cry the child started up:—

"Daddy," she moaned. "Oh, Daddy, the train. . ."

Stark fear gripped the mother's heart with icy fingers. She turned to the window, and, far away across the moor, reverberated the roar of a distant explosion. For a moment she stood transfixed, then with a sob tore open the door and vanished into the night.

—Ille Tum.



CAELICOLAE MAGNI. . . .

A humble sixpence in his horny palm:
What if he spend it? After all, what harm?
Just for one evening of exotic bliss
Who could regret a paltry thing like this?
Merely the price of one foul pint of beer
(Few are the things he holds in life more dear);

Let him forego his usual debauch,
And Shakespeare (Baynton's version) go
to watch.

Somewhere in Southgate's wild and wintry
waste

Waits to receive him, in his furtive haste,
Sinister, hidden, a black alley-way,
Stygian at night and rarely light by day,
Wherein lies hidden a bleak entrance drear,
Gate of the Gods: his destination here.

Here, whence the Gods look down on all
below

Inter Deos! Soon he'll be there. And lo!
See how, with furtive and self-conscious
air,

Creeping within those bleak grim portals
bare,

He vanishes
Let us, to satisfy a foolish whim,
Expend but sixpence there and follow him.

Once now inside, the first two flights of
stairs,

Leading aloft into the godly lairs,
Easily conquered he assails the third:

OUR SYNDICATED STORY.

"THE VULTURES. . . ."

THE LAST CHAPTER BE IT KNOWN,
WAS WRITTEN FIRST.

CHAPTER I.—£50,000!

"So you see, Jimmie," said Sir Charles Riches, "that these people are absolutely the outside limit. I should say they are the most thoroughgoing blackguards in Europe. They got this correspondence written by the Princess and this undergrad. at Oxford; and, of course, blackmail was their game straight away. They had the sense to wait for their chance, and it came when she became engaged to the Prince of Mauricia. They wrote to her and threatened her with exposure; they named an impossible price. I had known her for years; in her despair she told me about it. I shan't tell you the whole story, but anyhow I managed to get the letters for her; in return I asked her for this blackmailing letter. She gave it to me on a promise of absolute secrecy; and now I'm going to make those blighters pay for it. A fortnight to-night, if all goes well, you and I, Jimmie, will have bettered our pockets to the tune of at least twenty-five thousand a piece. To-night I am going to town to make the arrangements.

"Sounds very nice," said James Dickson, stretching his brawny 6ft. 2in. in the armchair opposite. "But what about me? Do I come in with the hearty cheer when the work's done?"

"On the contrary," said his uncle, "yours is the most important part. These men are not going to let slip this money without a struggle; and I'm not fool enough to keep the document here. As a matter of fact, it's in the house of a friend of mine, Fordyce, in Galway. You've got to go there and bring it back in time for me."

"Rely on me," said Dickson. "I'd bring you a dozen documents from Galway with twenty-five thousand at the end of it. When do I start?"

"At once, I think," said Sir Charles. "I've ordered the car for half-past eight, so you'd better go and pack."

"Right-ho!" said Dickson, rising.

Sir Charles got up. "It's not a picnic," he said. "You'll deserve the money, if you ever get it."

"If!" said Dickson, with a laugh. "It's ours, uncle!"

"Well, we'll try, Jimmie, and good luck."

They shook hands, a curiously assorted pair, Sir Charles small and wizened; Dickson tall, broad-shouldered. Then Dickson went.

The room was swimming in the infinite soft melancholy of an autumn twilight; and, as he looked into the fire, the toned golden of its flames played in curious flickerings over Sir Charles's furrowed face. There was a pursing of the lips—it bespoke uncertainty. . . .

As the great car purred along the London road, Sir Charles told Dickson the details of his plan. He was to go to the house in Galway, where the documents lay in a safe in Fordyce's house. There he was to stay until Sir Charles recalled him, when he was to hasten back to London. Sir Charles was to arrange the transaction as early as possible; long delay spelt danger.

Fordyce, it appeared, knew nothing of the document; ostensibly Dickson was going to his house for a brief holiday. Sir Charles had wired him on the previous day; to-morrow night he would be awaiting Dickson's arrival.

"It seems simple enough," said Dickson. "I don't see why we shouldn't pull it through."

"No . . . not yet," said Sir Charles. "But I shall not feel confident until I lay my fingers on the money."

They parted at Euston. As Dickson descended from the car a man on the pavement, with a hat pulled well down over his eyes, lurched awkwardly, and put his hand on Dickson's coat to steady himself.

"I'm fearfully sorry," he said. "Orange peel, I think . . ." and immediately disappeared into the crowd. Dickson, a minute later, putting his hand in his coat pocket, found a neat knife-slit in the lining. He began to think.

Sir Charles drove for some time through the lighted streets of the city. The car finally drew up in a square of mansions long since converted into places of business. In spite of the brilliance of the street lighting, the tall, grimy, solid houses somehow gave the place a gloomy air; they looked as if, in rebuke to the glare of the arc-lights, they had decided among themselves that artificial illumination, beyond flambeaux and link-boys, was a serious slight upon their Georgian stolidity.

The door of the building at which Sir Charles descended was ornamented with a large brass plate, whereon was the legend:

"CENTRAL OFFICES.
THE FIREFLY
INSURANCE COMPANY."

Sir Charles ascended the flight of steps to the door, rang the bell, and gave his card to the servant who came. He was shown into a room opening off a broad entrance hall with a promptness which showed his visit was expected.

He found himself in a well-lit and well-furnished room. In the hearth blazed a cheerful fire. At one side stood a grandfather's clock, while the centre of the room was occupied by a polished mahogany table, at which were seated four men in evening dress.

A fifth advanced across the room to greet Sir Charles.

"Good evening," he said. "I hope we can get this little matter settled quickly and to everyone's satisfaction. Won't you sit down, Sir Charles?"

Sir Charles took a chair.

"Argument is unnecessary," he said. "I want fifty thousand for this letter."

The man who had greeted him was standing with his back to the fire.

"Indeed," he said, with a bland smile, "Gentlemen, is this letter worth fifty thousand to us?"

One of the men at the table sprang up. He was a slight figure, with a drawn and pallid face.

"Look here, President," he said. "We've no time to waste." He turned to Sir Charles. "Now then, hand over the paper."

Sir Charles found himself looking into the barrel of an automatic.

"I'm not quite such a fool," he said.

The President chuckled. "Sit down, Carlton," he said. "Very well, Sir Charles, shall we say a week on Monday? At ten p.m. we shall be waiting for you here." He rang for the servant. "Good night, Sir Charles."

"Good night," said Sir Charles.

When he had left the room, the little man, Carlton, broke out, "What the devil——"

"Now, now, Carlton," said the President. "Let me explain. Naturally Sir Charles did not bring the letter here, and for the very good reason that at the present moment it lies in the house of Humphrey Fordyce, in Galway.

"Fordyce!" gasped Carlton. The men at the table looked blank.

"Fordyce," said the President. "Sir Charles believes that he knows nothing of it; and Fordyce is prepared to sell us the letter at something below Sir Charles's figure."

"He'd better," said a black-bearded man. "We could never raise fifty thousand pounds for a week on Monday.

"True," said the President. "And if we didn't. . . But we can manage Fordyce all right."

The door opened, and a man in an overcoat, with a hat pulled over his eyes, came into the room.

"Aha, friend Jackson," said the President. "And what news have you for us?"

Jackson took off his hat and revealed a close-cropped bullet head.

"I've followed Riches' nephew to Euston," he said. "And he's just left on the Liverpool train."

CHAPTER II.—PLOT AND COUNTER-PLOT.

Fordyce's house was a spacious building surrounded by a very fine park, in which were included tennis courts, a bowling green, and a miniature lake. Everything was kept scrupulously neat and tidy, the bowling green being in perfect condition, and the lake clean and free from scum.

Like the grounds, their owner was exceedingly neat, being, in fact, something of a dandy. But clothes do not make the man, and behind Fordyce's charming exterior there lurked the mentality of a criminal, although he was not driven to crime by necessity. He was fond of petty intrigue, and indulged his fondness whenever he had the opportunity. If the intrigue brought gain in the shape of money, so much the better.

He knew all about Riches and the letter which he had in his safe; consequently, when Riches had told him to expect Dickson, he had immediately surmised that Dickson was sent to get the letter. Nevertheless, in his role of villain, he gave him a hearty welcome, and, as there were half-a-dozen other young people staying at the house, Dickson looked forward to an enjoyable time.

On the second day of his visit he began to think about the matter in hand. Riches had said that the letter was in a safe in the house, so that a search for the safe seemed to be indicated first of all. But, strangely enough, there were no signs of a safe, as far as he had seen. The library was the place where one would expect such a thing, but Dickson had spent some time there and had seen nothing that could be rightly called a safe.

He had resort to guile. He went to his host, showed him a strong little box in which he carried an assortment of rubbish, and asked him to put it into his safe, as it was extremely valuable. Fordyce immediately saw through the little plot, and his eyes twinkled mischievously as he went towards a certain part of the wall. He pulled back a couple of shelves which were hinged and fastened by a catch, disclosing a small round safe let into the wall. In a minute he had opened this and let Dickson feast his bulging eyes on a black box at the back of the recess. He put his guest's box in the safe and closed it again. He swung

his shelves back into position, and turned to the gaping Dickson with a smile.

"There you are," he said.

"Thanks awfully," said Dickson, and went away to make schemes to get at that black box, in which he felt sure lay the valuable document. . .

The same night he was unable to sleep for thinking of the document, so he got up, and threw some clothes on, and went out on to the balcony which surrounded the house. It happened that his bedroom was immediately above the library, and, as he looked down, he saw a broad band of light streaming across the lawn from the library window.

"Fordyce is up late," he thought, when suddenly he saw a furtive figure stealing towards the house. It passed underneath the balcony, and Dickson, leaning over the balustrade, saw it tap on the French windows of the library, which opened immediately. The figure stepped in, and out of sight. Like a flash Dickson was over the balustrade, and dropped lightly on to the lawn. He crept cautiously to the edge of the windows, which remained open, and peered in. He started convulsively as he saw the figure in the light of the electric lamps. It was the man who had bumped against him and, presumably, split open his pocket at Euston Station. He was sitting at the table, opposite Fordyce. Dickson listened intently. The stranger was speaking.

"Come on, split the difference and make it six thousand."

"Not a penny less than seven thousand," said the other, "and that's final."

"Oh, all right then. I'll bring it on Monday," and the stranger rose from his chair. "But what about this Dickson fellow? Is he safe?"

"Oh, don't worry about him," said Fordyce with a smile. "I have him where I want him, all right."

They began to move towards the window, and Dickson stole away as quickly as he could.

"So he's got me where he wants me, has he?" he mused, as, ten minutes later, he returned to bed; "I'll show the beggar," and with this resolve he went to sleep.

The next day was Sunday, so that Dickson could do nothing to further his plans. Instead, he spent a day of glorious ease, basking in the sunshine of an Indian summer, with a pipe and a book.

As he watched the sunset the same evening, and listened to the whispering of the trees, the better feeling in him was for the first time given a chance to show itself, and the whole affair seemed rather sordid. Still fifty thousand pounds is fifty thousand pounds, and, after all, a man must live. So Dickson once again turned to the consideration of how to get the letter, which had never been far from his thoughts all day. There were only two times at which he could get the document. When Fordyce had it out ready to give to the stranger, and after the transaction, when it was in the latter's possession. In the former case guile would be needed; in the latter force. Which should it be? He decided to wait until the time of the meeting, and meanwhile, to let Riches know of this fresh development.

Accordingly he sent a telegram to his uncle on the following morning, which was the day of the transaction, and played tennis until dinner-time, when he received an answer. It was brief, and to the point.

"Do your best. Am coming.—Riches."

"He'll be too late to do anything," thought Dickson. It's to-night or never." And he turned his thoughts once more to a plan for getting the document. . . .

Twelve o'clock the same night. The air was perfectly clear and chilly. The moon was in its last quarter, and was frequently obscured by light clouds.

Dickson was crouched down on the balcony, watching for the stranger. It was time he came. Ah, there he was, scudding silently across the lawn, whilst a cloud was passing over the moon. There came the tapping on the library window, which was opened, as before, and once again Dickson swung over the balustrade on to the lawn below. He peered in through the window.

Fordyce was taking down a book from the shelves, a calf-bound, dry-looking tome. He opened, and, with a smile, took out a long, official envelope.

The stranger's hand was stealing towards his pocket, when Fordyce himself whipped out an automatic.

"Oh, no you don't, my friend," he said, smiling, and relieved him of his weapon.

"And now to business. Where's the money?"

The stranger sullenly produced a note-case from his pocket, and extracted a thick bundle of notes. Fordyce backed to the other side of the room, and, putting down the revolver within easy reach, proceeded to count the notes. There were seventy hundred pound notes.

"Right," he said, "take the document," and he handed him the envelope, which the other opened. He extracted the paper, read it, and placed it in his pocket.

"What about my gun?" he asked.

"Here you are," returned the other, and threw the weapon to him, taking care to keep him covered, however, with his own.

"Now get," he snapped, and the stranger, pocketing his weapon, turned towards the window.

Dickson backed from the window, and squeezed himself against the wall. Thus he missed the next act in the affair.

The stranger walked to the window meekly enough, but as he reached it, he looked round, saw that Fordyce had pocketed his revolver, and stepped back, whipping out his own weapon again.

"Shoot away," said Fordyce, cheerfully. "It's not loaded."

The other pulled the trigger, which clicked harmlessly, and, cursing savagely, put it back in his pocket. This time he went, as Fordyce had told him, and Dickson followed him stealthily. So expertly did he trail him, that the stranger reached the road without the slightest suspicion.

Here Dickson acted. Turning up his coat collar, and pulling his hat over his eyes, he quickened his pace until he was within a couple of yards of the other. Then he sprang. Seizing the other by the throat, he bore him backwards to the ground, shutting off his cry with a large and capable hand. Keeping one hand over his mouth, Dickson employed the other in searching

for the document, whilst the puny Jackson kicked and struggled vainly. The letter was soon found, and, putting it in his pocket, Dickson shoved the other into the ditch, and, darting through a gap in the hedge, sped away.

Jackson sat up dazedly, and cursed fluently and at length for some minutes. Then he shrugged his shoulders, and walked away, thinking and scheming to get the letter back; and, after all, he had not lost much, as the bank notes with which he had paid Fordyce were false. His employers could not afford to pay with real ones. These were much cheaper, and almost perfect imitations.

Meanwhile Dickson hastened back to his room in high spirits. He had fulfilled his part of the contract. It was up to Riches now to finish the job, and he should be in Galway by the morrow. Hiding the letter in his boot, he composed himself to sleep, and to dream of fifty thousand pounds.

CHAPTER III.

THE PENULTIMATE GASPS.

The glorious sunlight of an October morning streamed in at Dickson's window. With a drowsy yawn he sat up in bed, and then, as if in response to the appeal of such a wonderful morning, he sprang out of bed, and after throwing wide his windows commenced to dress. As he was donning his jacket he remembered the telegram he had received from Sir Charles Riches.

"By jove, yes," he murmured. "I'd better reply to him straight away."

Immediately after breakfast he hurried off to the nearby village post office, and in his haste did not notice the slinking figure of Jackson detach itself from the cover of a hedge and follow him.

Arrived at the post office he picked up a wad of telegraph forms and wrote the following:—

"Riches, Balmoral Hotel, Dublin.—Meet me Ballycorn midday Tuesday. Succeeded.—Dickson."

Thereupon he handed in his message and hurried back to Fordyce's mansion to pack his bag. As he passed the library

door on his way upstairs he saw Fordyce seated at a small table, apparently writing a letter. He stepped across to the half-open door.

"Hallo, Fordyce, I hope you're not busy. I just wondered if you could get me that box of mine? You see, I shall be packing soon, for I must get back. My week-end is just about over."

Fordyce looked up. "Must you really go?" he asked. "Well, I hope you've had a successful week-end, Dickson."

"Oh, quite," said Dickson, reassuringly. "Never had a more successful week-end in my life!"

Fordyce looked up rather sharply, but merely contented himself with a nod. "Well, I hope you'll come again soon," he said, rising and holding out his hand.

"Thanks awfully," said Dickson. "Now I must be off. Good-bye!"

"So long," said Fordyce, with a peculiar look.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, what of Jackson. After watching Dickson make off for the Manor from a nearby doorway, he hurried into the post office. Seeing the wad of forms which Dickson had used he quickly tore off the top one and held it up to the light. There, as plainly as if written, was Dickson's message, traced through by the forceful strokes of that worthy's pencil.

Seeing the postmistress staring at him in amazement, he thrust the form into his pocket, snarled out an order for stamps, and, on receiving them, hurried out.

He stood for a while on the roadside. "So that's their game, is it?" he muttered with an oath. "Well, Mr. Smart Dickson, we'll see what happens." And with unutterable disgust expectorated at a nearby cat.

His next move was to inquire at the station for the next train to Ballycorn. On being informed that one left in ten minutes he booked a ticket, and strolled on the platform.

Arrived at Ballycorn, his first visit was to the village inn, which went by the intriguing designation of "The Cauliflower." On a bench outside was seated a wheezing, a decrepit old man. By an assiduous ap-

plication of beer and tobacco Jackson learnt all he wanted to know, namely, whether or not there was a lonely cottage to be had, and also the whereabouts of the owner. Immediately Jackson sought out the owner, a genial Irish peasant-farmer named O'Reilly, and arranged for an inspection.

His host led him to a smart-looking horse and trap and bade him climb up. Jackson did so, and O'Reilly took his seat beside him and whipped up the cob. After about ten minutes' ride, which brought them out high on a hill side with a marshy valley on their right, O'Reilly pointed with his whip to a dense clump of trees, through which could be discerned a dilapidated hovel with a tiny weed-grown garden.

"There's yurr cottage, sorr," he said; "but I dunno whether ye'll like ut. Howiver, the rent is but three shillings a week. Ye can take it or leave it!" After a moment's thought Jackson said, "Done! I'll take it. But can you tell me where I can get a pony and trap for a week?" "Why sure, sorr! I meself have another cob and trap I'll hire ye if ye can look after him, and ye can use my own stable." "Just the thing," said Jackson with a grim smile; "I'll take them both for about a week."

That night, however, he slept at the village inn, and on Tuesday morning he hurried out and harnessed up his cob to the trap. He then drove out towards the station, which was some distance from the village, and did not stop until the railway was in view, at the end of a straight stretch of road. Having drawn his pony into the side of the road he took from his pocket two or three long dark-coloured sticks of some paste-like substance, a false moustache, and a red wig. After a few deft touches of the grease-paint (for such it was, as the reader has doubtless surmised) he applied his moustache and wig. The transformation was marvellous. Gone was the sallow-faced, shifty Jackson, and in his place a bluff, red-haired Irishman. He waited there for nearly an hour in that peaceful country lane, with no sound but the twittering of birds and the horse's nibbling of the grass—waiting for the two arrivals already overdue. Suddenly he heard the shriek of an engine whistle and a train came round a curve and ran into the station. Jackson loosened for action a dark thick object in his jacket pocket, and urged on his pony to a canter. As he

neared the station a solitary figure came out, a tall, brawny young fellow whom he immediately recognised as Dickson.

As the latter neared the trap Jackson hailed him in a hearty voice:

"Ahoy, young feller! Be you Maister Dickson?"

Dickson stood and gaped at him. "Well," he stammered, "as a matter of fact I am. But what on earth——?"

"Maister Riches sent me to take ye to him in my trap. He'm be waiting up yonder in a cottage he's rented for a day or two. If ye'll just jump up I'll have ye theerr in hafe-an-hoor."

Dickson jumped up with alacrity, and the pair drove off. Arrived on the lonely hill-side Dickson looked round with interest on the purple of hills and valleys, stretching away as far as the eye could see, fading away mistily into the distance.

Once more the poet in him was roused, but his companion had no eye for all this. He was gripping the object in his jacket pocket. Dickson turned with shining eyes:

"Isn't that a marvellous view!" he cried with rapture, pointing up the valley.

"'Tis," said Jackson calmly. Then, with sudden ferocity, "Look at this now, you swine!" And with these words he dealt Dickson a sickening blow over the temple (with the life-preserver, of course).

When Dickson awoke to consciousness, he stared up wonderingly. "What the devil," he tried to groan platonically, endeavouring to press his hands to his throbbing temples. Then it was that he discovered that he was bound hand and foot and gagged. Looking up, he saw the remnants of a thatched roof above his head, through which he could discern one or two twinkling stars. On the walls of his prison the torn paper was hanging in shreds, while dust and filth covered the floor to a depth of at least one inch. He turned to the door, through which the rays of the waning moon shed a soft silvery glow. There a sight met his eyes that would have made him gasp had he been able; instead he merely contented himself by making an inane noise.

Within a yard of him lay Sir Charles Riches, M.P., gazing seraphically at the stars, while across the doorway,

occasionally emitting a snore, lay Jackson, reclining, at peace with all the world, with his—his, Dickson's—overcoat thrown over him.

To attract Sir Charles Riches' attention he emitted a loud snort. Riches gave a convulsive start and turned to face him. He was also gagged, as was Dickson, and their efforts to communicate to one another would have been, to an onlooker, distinctly amusing. The facial contortions perpetrated by Dickson's already unbecoming countenance made even Sir Charles's hatchet face break into an involuntary smile. But he quickly became serious, and silently dragging himself to a place where the dust was undisturbed, he began laboriously to trace out a message with his bound fingers. The result was just legible, and read as follows:—

IF GET AWAY GIVE DOCUMENT TO
ME AT DIGS, LONDON.

Dickson nodded to him to signify that the meaning had penetrated, and Sir Charles promptly rolled over his message, thereby effectively obliterating all traces of it. And not a moment too soon; for as soon as they had resumed their original positions, not without some noise and trepidation, Jackson emitted an unusually loud snort and woke to life. He gazed round dazedly, and then realised that his prisoners were in full possession of their faculties (at least, Sir Charles Riches).

Jackson rose and stood over them. Gone was his disguise, and he stood in his usual guise, with the close-cropped bullet head and shifty eyes so well known, at least to Dickson.

"So you've decided to come round have you?" he asked with heavy sarcasm. "Damn you both!" he snarled with a lightning change of demeanour; "it's my turn now. Where's that document?"

Neither of his prisoners gave a sign. With an oath he started to search Dickson's pockets, but with no success. Rather, he was decidedly unsuccessful, in that he unwittingly loosed Dickson's bonds to some slight extent, but not sufficiently to allow of his freeing himself. Nor was he more rewarded in the case of Sir Charles Riches.

"Are you going to give it up?" he snarled menacingly. Meeting with no

response he shrugged his shoulders. "Right! I'll fix you both, you —"

Bending over Sir Charles Riches, he seized him by the collar and dragged him to the door. Leaving him there, he disappeared for a moment, but was soon heard, profanely exhorting the horse to "Come up, damn it!" In a moment he reappeared, and, unceremoniously bundling Sir Charles into the trap, he threw a sack over him and drove off into the moonlit night.

Sir Charles Riches was dimly conscious of the fact that the trap was in motion. The ground or road was extremely rough, and in no wise conducive to a comfortable journey. After a while, however, the trap reached the road, and thereafter the journey was comparatively easy. By this time the sack had slipped from its original place and Sir Charles could see the surrounding country, as far as was possible from his position in the bottom of the trap. Jackson, with his back to him, was whipping up the frantic horse to a gallop, and they were careering along the lonely road at a tremendous rate. For perhaps an hour and a-half they continued their ride, the horse now walking, now running, now galloping, in accordance with the gradient of the road. The horse was now a pitiable sight, and finally came to a shuddering halt, its eyes bloodshot, frothing at the lips, its steaming flanks heaving spasmodically. Even Jackson realised it could go no further, and, releasing it from the shafts, turned it loose on the roadside. Then turning to Sir Charles Riches, he hauled him out of the trap and deposited him on the grass under the hedge.

"Well, Riches," he began, familiarly planting a kick in that worthy's ribs, "I should say you're in a bit of a mess." The nearest railway station's four miles off, and by the time you get back to our amorous rendezvous both Dickson and I will be some distance away."

Thereupon he began to refasten the horse to the trap. By this time the creature was more normal, but he saw that to make it travel four miles he must give it time to recuperate. He produced a time-table of the railways of the district, and began to consult it. An expression of satisfaction overspread his countenance.

"Good," he muttered to himself. "Train to Dublin in three hours from Ballycorn."

He gave the horse another half-hour, and then, partially loosening Riches' bonds, he got up and drove off slowly towards Ballycorn.

"Hey!" wailed Riches; "what about me?"

"Aw, go to hell," said Jackson. "You should get loose quick enough now."

When Dickson heard the trap drive off he wrestled furiously with his bonds, but it was not until nearly an hour had elapsed before he could free himself. Then he composed himself to thought. Finally he decided to wait until Jackson returned. Ensconcing himself behind the half-open door he prepared for a long and weary vigil.

Just as the rising sun was tinting the sky with a hue of rosy gold a trampling of hoofs and rattle of wheels made itself heard to the waiting Dickson. With an anticipatory smile he drew back his foot, and just as the unsuspecting Jackson hove in sight inside the door he smote him as hard as he could with an exceedingly capable boot. Jackson flew the length of the cottage and brought up with a thud against the opposite wall. He turned with a snarl, his hand at his hip-pocket. But before he could draw his gun Dickson was upon him, and laid him low with an extremely well-directed right to the jaw. He then proceeded systematically to beat up his adversary. When, at last, he did stroll out of the cottage Jackson's appearance defied description. At the doorway Dickson stood for a moment irresolute; then, with the words "I'd better get to the digs in London as he said," muttered in an undertone, he strolled off rapidly in the direction of Ballycorn station.

As Jackson heard Dickson's words a plan began to formulate in his fuddled mind. Clearer it grew, and the expression on his face grew more pleased in consequence, till finally he burst into an audible chuckle, rose, and tottered through the doorway.

Arrived in the village, he bought some stationery at the post office, then settled himself to write at a table provided for the purpose. The letter which he finally posted would have surprised more than one person knowing his connections with Dick-

son, for it was to him, and no other, that it was addressed! Having posted his missive he made his way to Ballycorn Station and took the next train to Dublin. Just as the train was about to start Jackson saw the dishevelled figure of Sir Charles Riches come rushing towards the train, tear open the first door he came to, and finally to sink panting in a corner seat.

"Just as I thought," nodded Jackson, grimly, as the train steamed slowly out of the station.

Arrived at Dublin, Jackson allowed Sir Charles Riches to approach the station exit before he left the train, and then trailed him through the streets of that illustrious city. His first call was at the police headquarters, and from that place Jackson trailed him to the harbour. "Will he try that cursed yacht?" muttered Jackson savagely, as he watched Sir Charles Riches' dubious and undecided movements. Then, "Thank Heaven!" as he saw him read with surprise the name painted on the bow of a steam yacht drawn up by a convenient wharf.

When Sir Charles Riches saw the name "Lady Erica" painted on the bow of the trim yacht in front of him he could have shouted with surprise and joy. Instead he contented himself with hurrying aboard and bursting into the lounge of the vessel. For to whom did it belong but his greatest friend, Lord Robert Sterne, now on a business trip in Dublin? Fortunately he was the only occupant of the lounge at the time.

"Hallo Riches," he cried in amazement, recognising his visitor. "What the . . . ?"

"Never mind the details, old man," gasped Riches. "Can you get me back to Kingsea to-night?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, we sail in an hour to that very place. I might have expected you." Riches wondered at this, but had no chance to make an observation. "Come on and get a change and a meal." Jackson, peering through a porthole from the wharf, saw the two sit down at a well-spread table, before he hurried back to the station.

At the station his destination was the left luggage office, and here he produced a ticket and curtly demanded a black bag "that he left here a week ago." On receiving it he opened it to see if the contents were in order, and, being satisfied on that score, he hurried back to the harbour. Here he entered a small cafe, and, ordering a good square meal, waited for sundown. When the twilight was giving place to darkness he crept stealthily from the cafe, and, silently and unseen, boarded the *Lady Erica*, fifteen minutes before she was due to sail. Concealing himself beneath a pile of tarpaulin in the hold he waited until he felt the yacht put out to sea before he made a move. Then he extracted a small, square object from his bag, and fitted a key into one side of it. The box opened, disclosing a clock face and a hole in the centre of the figure VI., just as one might expect in the usual mantelpiece clock. He turned the hands to the correct time (6-30), and also moved a small lever until it was alongside the figure IX. Then he deposited this deadly, ticking horror beneath the tarpaulin: an infernal machine—the machination of an infernal mind. Cautiously raising the hatch he looked towards the shore. Dublin was still well in sight; and, creeping across the deck, he slipped over the side and swam for land, leaving his burden to do its deadly work.

CHAPTER IV.—THE LAST GASP.

Two days after the events so ably narrated in the preceding chapter Dickson stood on the cliffs of Kingsea Harbour, ostensibly watching the sunset. With the westward swoop of the sun the air grew chilly, and he drew his thin mackintosh more closely about him. The prospect from the cliffs that evening would have been hailed with delight by any poet or artist, or even the man who prepares those alluring seaside posters; but Dickson never took his gaze from the white line of foam that marked the entrance to the harbour.

He had now been there for three hours, thinking of the strange train of circumstances that had brought him, James Dickson, to this minute fishing village which looked out upon the broad Bristol Channel. Often he came near to leaving the place in disgust. He told himself that he was the victim of a "plant," a silly hoax.

And yet—the letter which he had received had been convincing in tone, intriguing in its phraseology. He admitted to himself an overpowering curiosity as to this "*Lady Erica*" whom he was to meet "as she came from the sea." And as to the document that he was to deliver to Sir Charles Riches.

"Yes," he told himself, after each of these attacks of that stagnant and negative disease known as commonsense, "*Lady Erica*" will surely come. He waited watch till dusk; he would wait till midnight—till she came.

* * * * *

Meanwhile the members of the combine sat round the heavy mahogany table in their London office. None of them spoke; they sat motionless, with bowed heads, like the doomed criminals they were; save when Carlton turned nervously to glance at the clock. Their one hope lay in Jackson. If they heard nothing by midnight they were saved. But even Jackson was not superhuman. . . .

Suddenly a step sounded in the corridor outside; the door was pushed open, and there was an audible sigh of relief when the intruder was seen to be Fordyce.

"What the devil do you want?" said Carlton, savagely.

"Er—I just came to see if you had heard anything yet."

"No, damn you, get out."

Fordyce flushed—and went.

Slowly the minutes passed. The loud tick of the imposing clock seemed to the financiers like the working of some great infernal machine, timed soon to go off and to blow up all their hopes, their ambitions, and their reputations, and they knew that the crash of their destruction would be heard throughout the world. . . .

The clock struck eleven, and hope began to dawn in their minds. Suppose Jackson—he was a clever and confident man, and was not burdened by any moral considerations—suppose Jackson had succeeded. If he had secured that damning letter defeat and ruin would be turned into victory and the realisation of their wildest hopes. Even as midnight, and,

with midnight, safety approached, the silence did not grow less intense or the atmosphere less electric; for the members of the combine, whom business and a mutual lack of scruple had brought together, were far from being personal friends; and whatever may have been their feelings, whatever their thoughts, they did not confide them to each other.

Finally, the President rose. "Gentlemen," he said, "I think we may now safely infer that Jackson has, in some amazing way, been successful. No ordinary delay could have made Riches two hours late. So now I, for one, will try to get some sleep.

The financiers dispersed in silence; the realisation of their startling reprieve was rendered less distinct by the clouds with which sleeplessness and anxiety had covered their minds. Their features were fixed in the grim lines of terror, and had not yet been relaxed by the good news which time had brought them.

* * * * *

Next morning the President scanned his morning paper with unusual eagerness. The heading of a column immediately attracted his attention:—

"Financier Drowned at Sea.
Yacht 'Lady Erica' Founders With All
Hands."

Without pausing to read the account he turned feverishly to the "agony" column. Swiftly he glanced down the medley of codes and pseudonyms until his eyes came upon a single-line notice:—

"It was the only way.—Jackson."

For a long time he stared at the words, thinking rapidly. Then at last—"Saved," he muttered; "but, my God, at what a price!"

FINIS.

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To the Editor of "The New Heathen."

Heath Grammar School, Halifax,

November 29th, 1925.

Dear Sir,—

I should just like to suggest an improvement for the Library—not of the usual futile kind—but an improvement

which, I believe, has never before been suggested. And that is, to inaugurate a Musical Section. Most libraries have a musical section of sorts, and there is no reason why a school of such standing as Heath undoubtedly is should be left behind in the race. There is no need for anxiety as regards expenditure, for an ample supply of music could be obtained, for a start, by the expenditure of a mere ten shillings or so. A judicious selection of Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach would satisfy the expectations of even the most optimistic. For in the school there are undoubtedly several persons who would welcome such an addition. Why not cater for these also? At present we have one senior history student; and yet the first thing which strikes the eye of one examining the library is the prominence of the history section. Both the senior classics and science sections of the School possess at least five members, and yet the classical and modern sections are confined to just over a shelf each.

But the books which enjoy the widest circulation are those provided for the very youngest boys. Nevertheless, these books are avidously devoured by everyone up to and including the Remove Form. Their excuse is that the rest of the fiction is unenjoyable to a degree. Surely this state of things is not to last? I merely suggested music as a way out of this difficulty, and to satisfy the music-lovers of Heath. But it would seem that drastic alterations are necessary before the Library can become anything but a never-ending supply of lurid fiction, provided for the especial benefit of a depraved and degenerate mob.

Yours sincerely,

"AGER PUBLICUS."

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: : FOOTBALL. : :

We commenced the season with a good list of matches, and looked forward to a very successful year. The weather was not at all favourable on a few of the days when we played, and then a hard frost set in and made the ground so hard that it was deemed inadvisable to play. In consequence matches for both elevens against Huddersfield College, Almondbury, and Dewsbury had to be cancelled. We visited

Ovenden to see the opening of the new ground there and the game with Hartlepool Rovers. J. J. Glendinning, Esq., gave us 20 complimentary tickets, and we beg to thank him again for his kindness.



H. G. S. A.F.C.

Saturday, Oct. 3rd, v. Rastrick G.S., home

Team.—Green; Coghlin (i.), Chambers; Kendall, Shore, Bessey; Coghlin (ii.), Tipple (2), Beswick (2), Naylor, Robinson (1).

Referee.—F. Cockroft.

Beswick lost the toss and Heath started uphill against the wind. Rastrick pressed early but to no effect, and from a break-away Tipple scored for Heath with a nice cross-shot. Soon after Beswick added a second. After a period of pressure by Rastrick, the visitors scored their only goal. Before the interval Tipple had added a third for Heath. In the second half Robinson and Beswick scored further goals. **Won. 5—1.**

Notes on the Game.—Throughout the game the defence was quite sound, and Green made a startling debut in goal, showing great promise. The forwards could be more accurate, especially in front of goal, and should be more careful in their passing.

Wednesday, October 7th, v. Rishworth
G.S. Away.

Team.—Green; Coghlin, Chambers; Kendall, Shore, North; Robinson, Tipple, Beswick (1), Naylor, Smalley.

Heath kicked off downhill before quite a moderate attendance. Throughout the greater part of the first half Heath were on the aggressive, and seldom did the Rishworth forwards get past the backs. Soon after the start Beswick scored from a melee in front of goal this being the only score before half-time. Upon the resumption Rishworth were the more aggressive, and the second half was contested at a furious pace. Five minutes from the end Rishworth rushed the ball through, and the match ended in a **draw, 1—1.**

Notes.—The new arrangement of the forwards did not bring about the desired improvement; in fact it was through the forwards that Heath did not win. Had they

played anything like their games in practice, they should have got at least three goals. The defence was perfectly sound.

Saturday, October 10th, v. Almondbury
G.S. Home.

Team.—Green; Coghlin, Chambers; Beswick (1), Shore, North; Coghlin, Tipple (1), Naylor, Smalley, Robinson.

Referee.—F. Cockroft.

Playing uphill in the first half, Heath were rather hard pressed in the earlier stages of the game, and conceded a goal. Soon after, however, Tipple scored a good goal with a smart cross-shot. In the second half Almondbury secured a further point, but through a mistake on the part of the visiting defence Beswick, now centre forward, was left with an open goal, and made no mistake. In the last five minutes, however, Almondbury scored two further goals, and won the match. **Lost, 2—4.**

Notes.—The forwards were again much too haphazard and weak. One or two showed a marked tendency to cling to the ball too long, while the passing requires a great deal of practice and improvement. The same applies to the shooting.

**Saturday October 31st, v. Sowerby Bridge
Secondary School. Away.**

The match was played in extremely unpleasant weather conditions, and both teams did remarkably well to acquit themselves so creditably. As the score suggests, Heath won rather comfortably, but at no period had they the game entirely their own way. For Heath the scorers were Tipple (3), Naylor (2), and Coghlin, F. R. **Won, 6-2.**

Notes.—A feature of this game was a distinct all-round improvement in the forwards' play. The halves supported them quite satisfactorily, and the backs were again their usual selves. Green's play in goal was quite commendable.

Wednesday, November 11th, v. Halifax
Technical College. Away.

Team. — Green; Coghlin. Kendall; North, Shore, Smalley; Coghlin, Tipple (1), Beswick, Naylor (1), Robinson.

Although handicapped by the size of the ball and the geography of the field, Heath coped successfully with the smart play of

their smaller opponents. Before half-time Naylor hooked in a neat goal, and in the second half Tipple drove the ball (apparently) through the net for Heath's second goal. These were the only two goals scored in the match. **Won, 2-0.**

Notes.—The forwards maintained, in a modified degree, their promising play of the previous match. The halves were generally sound, but North would improve by regulating his passes and not kicking in quite so haphazard a manner.

—F. Cockroft (Hon. Sec.), pro J.L.G.

THIRD XI.

(Captain: J. Holroyde).

By flattery, professions of eternal devotion, even by bribery in the form of improved work, one unfortunate master was prevailed upon at the beginning of this term to undertake the formation and conduct of a Third XI. for boys under 14 years of age. This fatal decision having been made, applications for membership began to pour in. Apparently the Middle School was under the impression that an army corps was in process of formation! In such circumstances there were necessarily many disappointments, but those fellows who failed to get a place this season are, of course, hoping for better luck in the future. So they must keep in practice.

Our fixture list is very small this season, due largely to the impossibility of sending out our challenges before the summer holidays. Our first match (versus Rishworth) was fixed for November 14th, but, to our great disappointment, had to be cancelled owing to the ground being unfit for play.

Eleven days later we visited Halifax Technical School, and were well beaten by a much heavier side. Again the ground was very hard, and a high wind militated against accurate passing, but in spite of the difficulties the XI. played well together, and enjoyed a good game before retiring defeated by 5 goals to 1.



: : SCOUT NOTES. : :

At the eleventh hour these notes are written; they will be therefore eleventh hour-ish in temper—i.e., slightly short.

The School Troop has come to two far-reaching and important decisions during the past term; decisions reached after some

very careful deliberation, and which the future must either justify or condemn.

In the first place, two Rover patrols have been inaugurated. It has been felt for some time that a Rover section was more or less clearly indicated; and so, with the blessing of local and Imperial headquarters, ours came into being. They are functioning—not violently it is true, but they have been launched as it were, and their future is in their own hands to a very large extent. May they prosper in the way.

Secondly, we have decided to migrate from the "slit" in the wall above the Gym. changing rooms. We aren't a very particular crowd, but daily falls of white-wash flakes, clouds of gym. dust, and chronic dampness have, in combination with a somewhat confined space, caused us to seek a fresh home. This, thanks to the kind offices of The Speaker, through Captain Nicholl, we have succeeded in doing, and enter into possession of a fine airy and dry upper room in the new year. This room we have remodelled (largely through the help of Cub Eccles' father, of the Rovers, and one very versatile P.L.), and converted to our own use. Much paneling, electric light wiring, etc., have been done, and the place is beginning to look as if it will be a great asset.

But all this costs money as well as labour, and in order to raise this we have been most busy. We ran a military whist drive at school, and Mrs. J. Crossley and Mrs. Walter Walker each made a wonderful sacrifice in holding a private whist drive at their own houses. The sums from these events, plus our own "earnings," will, we think, manage to see us through, but we shall then be poor as the proverbial church mice, and have to start all over again, but this time, thank goodness, in comfort.

Of our Summer Camp there is little to tell, save that in spite of two bad days from the point of view of weather, it was most enjoyable. The routine work was admirably carried out by those boys whose unhappy lot it was to "go on orderly." Douriez and its inhabitants again proved most hospitable; the canoe was in good form, and the river exceedingly alluring, on it, if not in it.

A Scouty Christmas.

—Akela.

TO-NIGHT IN A MILLION HOMES

At 10 o'clock will come the time signal. Many will have to correct their Watches. Some will put them back, others again will put them forward—once again for a brief spell they will be exact. Others again, and they are a rapidly increasing number, will have a confident smile. They won't need to alter their Zenith at all, for it will be JUST right. They remember all the dud watches they had before they got it. They remember the very reasonable price they paid, and all it has saved them since, and now they know the satisfaction—the security of a safe investment—the right time—all the time for a lifetime.

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